

Defending Human Rights in Colombia

Thursday March 6, 1pm

Rally at Victorian Parliament House

Spring Street, Melbourne

For the forcibly disappeared

For the displaced

For the unionists assassinated by paramilitary death squads

In Colombia 3.5-4 million people, have been forcibly displaced, mostly by paramilitary groups. These groups, backed by the military, have 'disappeared' at least 15,000 Colombians and have buried more than 3000 people in mass graves or thrown their bodies into rivers. They have killed more than 1700 indigenous people and 2550 unionists. Nearly 5000 members of the Patriotic Union have been assassinated.

Between 1982 and 2005, State security forces or paramilitaries have perpetrated more than 3,500 massacres and stolen more than six million hectares of land. They have also been responsible for arbitrary detentions, threats, economic blockades, rape and torture, among others. Campesino, afro-Colombian, and Indigenous communities, as well as social leaders, human-rights defenders, women, children, trade unionists, journalists and displaced people are disproportionately targeted.

Despite a "demobilization" process which began in 2003, paramilitary groups continue to commit crimes, killing an estimated 600 people every year. Many have in fact not demobilized, while others have reformed under different names such as the "Black Eagles". Paramilitary leaders have claimed to control 35% of the parliament, and many of these "Para-politicians" (who have links with these groups) remain in public office.

As recently as January 2008, paramilitary groups carried out two massacres, forcibly disappeared 9 people and assassinated another 8. The Army has committed 16 extrajudicial executions.

In Colombia, paramilitary and state agents continue to violate human rights and international humanitarian law, and almost all these crimes remain in impunity.

Despite all these disturbing facts, the Colombian people in different ways of struggle (from the insurgence to street party festival) are confronting the state terrorism with more organisation and commitment for deep changes in Colombian society.

In Australia we denounce and condemn de Colombian and USA governments, responsible for all these human rights abuses...

We call all the organisations and people to show their solidarity with the Colombian people...

We call the Australian trade unions to raise their voices and support the Colombian workers. In Colombia to be a unionist is reason enough for to be killed...We need to do something...

Join us in our solidarity work and show you support on Thursday March 6, 1PM in the steps of Melbourne Parliament House, for our memory and those who still struggling for a better and just Colombia.

Call initiated by Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET), the Colombia Solidarity Network and Colombia Demand Justice Campaign, supporters and sponsors are welcome, write to latin.american.solidarity.network@gmail.com

In solidarity with Colombia
For those Disappeared, Displaced, Massacred, & Executed.
In solidarity with social movements committed for people's rights
In Solidarity with all those who struggle for justice and dignity,
For the sovereignty of the people,
For a just, fair and free Colombia,
For protection of labor and social rights,
We say no to US intervention in Colombia!
We say no to State Terrorism in Colombia!

Further information: Call 0400 914 944 or write to lasnet@latinlasnet.org

In Melbourne Australia;

Latin American Solidarity Network (LASNET) - www.latinlasnet.org
Colombia Solidarity Network
Colombia Demand Justice Campaign

Endorsed by:

Australian Council of Trade Union - ACTU
Victorian Trades Hall Council
Chilean Popular and Indigenous Solidarity Network
Australia Venezuela Solidarity Network
Peace and Justice for Colombia
More to add...

In Colombia: Social and Human Rights Organisations of Colombia -
Movement of Victims of State Crimes (MOVICE)

In USA: Colombia Support Network

In England: Justice for Colombia